



Understanding
Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Field Nats News No 324



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn Vic 3130

Telephone 03 9877 9860

P.O. Box 13, Blackburn 3130 www.fncv.org.au

Newsletter email: joan.broadberry@gmail.com

(Office email: admin@fncv.org.au)

Editor: Joan Broadberry 03 9846 1218

Founding editor: Dr Noel Schleiger

Reg. No. A0033611X

Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC
Governor of Victoria

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 10 am - 4 pm.

November 2021

From the President

Once again, it is nearly the end of another year and we have remained productive during the pandemic by using ZOOM to facilitate our activities. Attendance at ZOOM meetings has been higher than those we have in the hall and has also enabled our remote members to participate in our activities.

We are getting close to having substantial reductions in COVIDSafe restrictions and we may soon be able to conduct some excursions. The risk will still be there so caution and safety procedures will still apply. In particular, all participants will need to be able to show proof of their full vaccination status before attending FNCV activities.

The Special General Meeting on 13th October was held via ZOOM which presented some organisational challenges and I would like to thank all of those who attended for their patience and forbearing during the meeting. There was clear support to proceed with the purchase of Mali Dunes without the sale of Cosstick Reserve.

A summary of the results of the voting on the two Special Resolutions is as follows:

Special Resolution 1 to authorise the purchase of the property known as Mali Dunes. For: 65 Against: 11 Abstain: 7

78% voted for this resolution, which was therefore passed.

Special Resolution 2 to authorise the sale of the property known as Cosstick Reserve. For: 48 Against: 20 Abstain: 13

59% voted for this resolution, which therefore failed to pass.

A number of people have told me that they have seen a lot of lynx spiders on vegetation this year. Indeed they are out in significant numbers. Most are less than 10 mm in length and can often be found sitting on flowers waiting for small insect prey.

Max Campbell (Photos: M. Campbell)



The due date for FNN 325 will be as usual the first Tuesday of the month
2nd November.

This will be the **December 2021-January 2022** issue

Editor: Don't forget to share with FNN what you have seen, read and photographed.

Use joan.broadberry@gmail.com

Index	Page
From the President	1
Calendar of Events	2
Members' news, photos & observations	3-5
Snoutmouth Caterpillar, <i>Paragorda nasuta</i>	6-7
Fauna Survey Group Report: Tracking the recovery of Woodland Bird Communities following habitat restoration	8
Book Reviews	9
Extracts from SIG reports given at the last Council Meeting	10
Australian Natural History Medallion; Grey Fantails	11
The Macquarie Collectors Chest	12

The views and opinions expressed in any material including websites and newsletters are not necessarily those of FNCV Inc.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS - November 2021

Unless otherwise stated, Zoom meetings are scheduled to begin at 8 pm. However to avoid disrupting the speaker please click the link and join the meeting a few minutes earlier.

Monday 1st – Fungi Group Meeting via Zoom. *Orchids and their Mycorrhizal Fungi.* Speaker: Brendan Janissen. Brendan is a PhD candidate at RMIT and ecologist. He has been researching orchids and their mycorrhizal fungi over the last few years. Brendan has focused on how they respond to climate change and hopes to improve our conservation efforts for host plants and fungal partners. More information: Melvin Xu 0410 522 533; fungifncv@gmail.com Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Saturday 6th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: *Braeside Park.* Meet at Red Gum Picnic Area (enter from south via Braeside-Dandenong Rd). We will spend time in the south of the reserve, including near the wetlands, searching for invertebrates in the bushes and trees. <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-38.0084,145.1342>
Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@mr.id.au

Monday 8th - Marine Research Group. No meeting.

Monday 8th – Australian Natural History Medallion Presentation cancelled.
Arrangements to be advised. See FNN p11

Tuesday 9th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting via Zoom. *The story of Bael Bael Grasslands Nature Conservation Reserve; five years of surveying grassland fauna.* Speaker: Andrej Hohmann, survey leader, Fauna Survey Group. More information: Ray Gibson: 0417 861 651; rgibson@melbpc.org.au Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link

Sunday 14th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: *Brisbane Ranges* Meet at the Fridays Picnic Area (adjacent to the campground), Steiglitz-Durridwarrah Rd (about 5km south-west from Geelong-Ballan Rd or 2km north of Meredith-Steiglitz Rd). We will visit Grahams Creek and surrounding areas hoping to see orchids as well as invertebrates. <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.8594,144.1902> Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@mr.id.au

Wednesday 17th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Meeting via Zoom: Speaker to be advised. More information and to receive the link: Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au 0409143 538; 9544 0181 AH

Thursday 18th – Botany Group Meeting Via Zoom: *The grassy volcanic plains of Melbourne: their urban context*
Speaker: Adrian Marshall, landscape architect, campaigner. Contact: Ken Griffiths botany@fncv.org.au or Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Monday 22nd - FNCV Council meeting via Zoom. Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au
Max will email all councillors the link.

Tuesday 23rd – Day Group 10.30 am Meeting . *To be advised.* Contact Joan Broadberry joan.broadberry@gmail.com 9846 1218

Wednesday 24th – Geology Group Meeting via Zoom: *A lifetime of Paleontology* Speaker: Dr Stephen Poropat, author and researcher with Australian Age of Dinosaurs Natural History Museum, Winton, Qld.
Contact: Ken Griffiths geology@fncv.org.au or Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Friday 26th – Juniors' Group, no meeting. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Sunday 28th - Terrestrial Invertebrates Group Excursion: *Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn* Meet near the west end of Beckett Park car park, at the end of Parring Rd (350m north of Whitehorse Road). This is a formal garden packed with native plants from around the country. <https://www.google.com/maps?q=-37.8109,145.0912> Contact: Reiner Richter fncv@mr.id.au

The calendar has been prepared on the assumption that in November, meetings will not be held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn. We are optimistic about excursions, however things may change. Also there may be numbers caps, so please check with the leader.

You are advised to register for excursions as soon as you can, preferably supplying a phone number and email, so that you can be reached at short notice. Please let the SIG contact know if your plans alter.

Members are reminded that they are required to wear a well fitted mask, socially distance and be able to provide evidence of double vaccination.



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$3 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. Junior non-member families, \$4 per excursion and \$2 per meeting.



Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for member photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: fnnews@fncv.org.au by the first Monday in the month.

Welcome
Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:

Sue Hayman, Danny Bendel, John Whelan, Frances Whelan, Priscila Ferraz Mendes Vieira, Eli Benshemesh, Ari Benshemesh, Joe Benshemesh, Anna Murphy, Mark Norman and Karen Zipkas.



bookshop@fncv.org.au

for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

Thanks to the
editorial and layout
team who put
together FNN 324

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

**Advertising in the
Field Nats News**
VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats
Office

admin@fncv.org.au

9877 9860

(Mon –Tues 10–4)

Facebook: 19,985 followers as of
27th September

What on earth is that?



Wattle Tick Scale on *Acacia Paradoxa*
Photo: Simon Wilton

Left: They look like a bunch of little berries on a wattle bush but these little lumps are actually **insects**, called Wattle Tick Scale. Each little rounded lump contains a small female sap-sucking insect which has also produced the protective covering that surrounds it. It is only the females that attach themselves to the branches and remain immobile. The female tick scale start life as tiny reddish bugs that hatch out and crawl along branches looking for a good position to start sucking sap.

Over time, they lose their legs and grow a waxy coat that is open at one end. The adult males are tiny, winged insects that do not eat, so have a very short life! Their main function is to find a female to mate with. After the male mates with the female, she grows bigger, turns brown, dies and a new generation of crawling tick scale hatch out. Adult males die within two or three days. Whilst the Wattle Tick Scale suck plant sap, they also produce a sweet liquid called honeydew, which attracts ants. These ants collect the honey dew and help to protect the Tick Scale insects from predators like spiders.

With thanks to *The Junior Naturalist* September 2021, volume 59 issue 8. Editors: Zoe Burton & Simon Wilton.

Members' observations continued



Entometa fervens
Photo: Danielle Edwards
St Andrews area.

From Max Campbell:

Left: Another lasiocampid caterpillar, much larger than *Pararguda nasuta*, that I no longer see at Clayton is that of *Entometa fervens* (left). It is a large caterpillar rivalling the Emperor Gum moth in size. They feed on eucalypts and I often used to find them with Emperor Gum caterpillars. Neither have appeared in my garden for over twenty years but were once very common.



From Denise Carew:

Above: While out on a walk in our local area recently, I came upon a Blue-spotted Hawker dragonfly (*Adversaeschna brevistyla*) perched in the middle of the footpath in the sun. It seemed completely unperturbed as I moved around it to take several photos. The ID was confirmed on iNaturalist.



From Sally Bewsher:

Above: Dark-spotted Tiger Moth or Light Ermine Moth
Spilosoma canescens.

Left: *Dasytopodia selenophora*, common name the Southern Old Lady Moth, is a moth of the family [Noctuidae](#). The species was first described by [Achille Guenée](#) in 1852. It is found in the southern half of Australia as well as Norfolk Island, New Zealand and Macquarie Island. The wingspan is about 90 mm. The larvae feed on Acacia species.

Both moths were found in Sally's garden.

From Carol Page: some images taken during Covid 19 restrictions



Dicranosterna immaculata



Gymnolistia sp.



Jotus auripes

Hardenbergia violacea



Peltoschema perplexum



Lasioglossum sp.



Nicodamidae sp.



Peltoschema sp.



Rainbowia sp.

Snoutmouth Caterpillar *Pararaguda nasuta*

Lockdown has given me an opportunity to focus considerable time on one hapless organism which, I might add, was not harmed in anyway apart from being repeatedly photographed over 4 weeks. Sunday August 8th was one of the first mild days we had experienced for some time. A few small Moth Flies were flying about along with some small drosophilids; both emanating from the compost bins. The evening was very mild so I toured the garden after dark and easily located 14 huntsman spiders waiting hopefully on foliage, fences and walls. A few small moths flitted by the headlamp and there were numerous shining cockroaches out on the plants. All of this a portent of our approaching spring. The most pleasing and perhaps surprising find was a lone 4.5 cm Snoutmouth Caterpillar (*Lasiocampidae*), *Pararaguda nasuta* which was quietly defoliating a young *Acacia floribunda* in a pot planter. It must have been active and growing through some very cold weather. At night it is easily seen with a headlamp since the foraging caterpillar contrasts the foliage (Photo 1); particularly the pale, spotted ventral surface (Photo 2).

By daylight, circa 6.30 AM the next day, it had descended to the lower trunk of the plant and pressed itself against the surface to be virtually invisible. The lappets and setae blend it into the stem. It is virtually impossible to see in the morning light (Photo 3) but flashguns and direct sunlight increase its visibility (Photos 4-5). However, if the sun is directly on the animal or it is disturbed it slowly moves its posterior end laterally, pauses and follows very gradually with the anterior end. It does this a few times until it is on the other side of the stem. The movement is almost imperceptible. I took a couple of flash photographs and while I checked the images it had carefully shuffled sideways out of sight.

At sunset, and depending on light levels, at circa 5.55 to 6.25 PM it ascended the plant to recommence



Photo 1. Feeding at night.

Photo 2. Ventral view feeding



Photo 3. Morning light

Photo 4. Flashgun

Photo 5. afternoon sunlight



Photo 6. 6.24 pm
head down

Photo 7. 6.27 pm,
a sudden U-turn to head
up to feed.

nocturnal feeding. This pattern continued for the next 11 days. When the light reached a certain level at dawn, the caterpillar did a sudden U-turn and headed downwards to rest for the day. The near perfect camouflage pattern is associated with a supportive, protective behaviour. During the day for about 12 hours, it remains perfectly stationary, head facing downwards (Photo 6), until sunset whereupon it suddenly awakens and again does a U-turn to move smoothly up the stem it is on (Photo 7). If disturbed by exposure to bright light, it may stop for up to 30 minutes and cling to the stem. It can do this several times until it reaches the upper foliage. None of these movements is likely to attract attention and I suspect it is also a protective strategy. When the planter was left outside, the caterpillar descended to the lowest part of the plant. When taken indoors the animal descended only to the first bit of woody stem and stopped there all day even when taken outside. Once outside, the next morning it rested on the lowest and thickest part of the plant nearer the soil once again. All of the time outdoors it was windy during the nights and early morning. This behaviour was tested and repeated several

(Continued on page 7)



Photo 8. Feeding, clinging with prolegs.

(Continued from page 6)

times. I suspect that air movement causes the plant to move about and the caterpillar settles on the least moving or more stable part of the plant during the day. Feeding and resting times didn't change between indoors (window sill) and outdoors locations and seem to be dictated by light levels. Whatever the drivers affecting the behaviour happen to be, the tiny ganglion that serves as a brain is certainly processing quite a bit of data. Obviously, a sample of one caterpillar is inadequate to draw too many conclusions about the behaviour of a species so I will be keeping an eye out for a larger population in the coming months. After the first week it had grown to 5 cm. The caterpillar holds itself tightly to surfaces using the strong muscular prolegs and their tiny, chitinous crotchet hooks or barbs. (Photos 8-9)

On 19th August the early morning was still and the caterpillar remained high in foliage pressed against a smaller stem (Photo 10) and did not appear to be feeding in the evening. It appeared to be slightly flaccid. On August 20th the caterpillar formed a 2.4 cm cocoon in the upper leaves (Photo 11-13) so now it was a matter of waiting to see the adult moth

which finally emerged early on the morning of September 8th (Photos 14 and 15). It measured 25mm in length. The pupation took 19 days and the moth was released to foliage under the protection of darkness.



Photo 9. Super Macro of the prolegs making contact with crochet barbs extended.



Photo 10. Resting near the top of the plant, slightly flaccid, about to pupate.



Photos 11-13. (above) Pupation and cocoon



Photo 14. Recently emerged adult, female *Pararaguda nasuta*. Dorsal

Photo 15. Recently emerged adult female *Pararaguda nasuta*. Lateral.



Max Campbell Photos: M. Campbell



Fauna Survey Group Report

Tracking the recovery of woodland bird communities following habitat restoration; insights from a multiscale long term study

Speaker: Dr Angie Haslem

At the FSG meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 7th September, Dr Angie Haslem, Research Fellow in the Department of Ecology, Environment and Evolution at La Trobe University, gave a presentation on *Tracking the recovery of woodland bird communities following habitat restoration; insights from a multiscale long term study*.

Vegetation restoration on cleared farmland is going ahead in many places providing the benefits of shelter belts, stream protection, wildlife habitat and aesthetic values. The replanted areas change over time at the local and landscape level and provide habitat for birds to return.

The study commenced in 2006-7 near Hamilton in the Glenelg Hopkins CMA where landscapes of 800 ha were selected which contained remnant vegetation grading from 18% down to 1%, or restored areas containing from 1% to 18%. Four seasonal surveys were conducted at 12 sites in each landscape, and the process repeated in 2019.

A total of 164 native bird species were recorded, 60 of which are woodland dependant, and 90% of these were recorded in revegetated sites. The number of species increased in the revegetation sites in the 12 years between surveys, to about the same number of species as in the remnant woodland, but the composition was different and didn't include hollow nesters and canopy specialists.

Early after planting, birds that favour a dense shrubby layer were common, such as Superb Fairy Wren, Red Browed Finch, and Brown Thornbill. There is a rapid change in bird assemblages in the early decades. Red Wattle Birds, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Grey Fantail, Crimson Rosella, White-browed Scrubwren and Golden Whistler were also present across the all plantings. Noisy Miners were present at one site only.

The White-throated Treecreeper was present in remnant native woodland and was only associated with more advanced plantings if they contained some old original trees.



Image: The author team (Haslem, Clarke, Holland,



Plantings reversed species loss, contributed to the overall vegetation cover, and contained more bird species if a diversity of trees and shrubs were chosen and fenced to prevent grazing. Plantings were of most value if they were associated with or included some of the old original trees. It is important to preserve existing old trees as their values were not replicated by revegetation plantings.

Raymond Gibson

Two all Australian books of botanical illustrations

1. ***Alphabotanical*** features botanical illustrations by Victorian botanical illustrators, the Whirlies. This dedicated group, as members of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, (FRBGM), meet each week at the Melbourne Gardens to paint together and generally support each other in development of their botanic art skills.

Alphabotanical features an A – Z of Australian flora. Each artist had to source and research their plant before painting it to a standardised size. Many of the plants are to be found in the Melbourne Gardens, but others required the artist to be resourceful in tracking down specimens Australia-wide to paint. The resulting publication is a most attractive book featuring a diverse range of Australian flora.



2. ***The Acacia Project*** is the second book recently completed by the Whirlies

Also the result of a group project, this book features 23 botanical illustrations of rare, endangered or unusual acacias growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. A description of the species accompanies each illustration and a location map indicates where you might expect to find each one growing in its natural habitat.

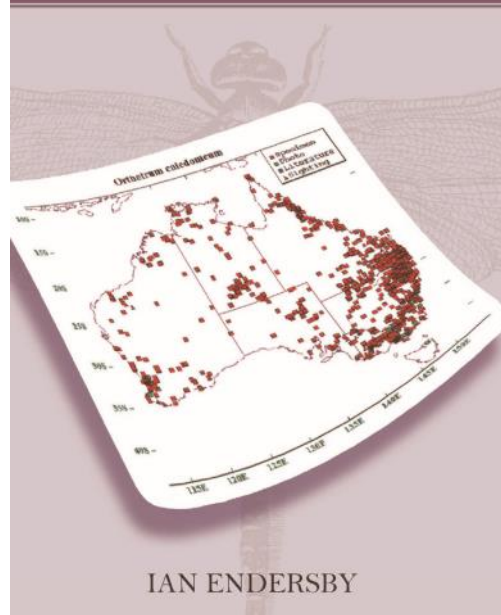
The artists have donated their artworks to the State Botanical Collection and all proceeds of sales of ***The Acacia Project*** book will be donated to the RBGV Herbarium to fund future Acacia research.

There couldn't be better gifts for relatives or friends who appreciate Australian plants, or someone overseas who will be amazed at the variety of attractive flora to be found growing on our continent. It is refreshing to see these books published in Australia, featuring Australian artists, using paper that meets Australia's sustainable environment standards, and printed in Australia.

To purchase copies contact:
Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, Inc.
 Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne Vic 3004
 T: (03) 9650 6398
 E: friends@frbgmelb.org.au
 W: rbgfriendsmelbourne.org



The Distribution of Australian Dragonflies



IAN ENDERSBY

The Distribution of Australian Dragonflies

I have recently published a book entitled *The Distribution of Australian Dragonflies*. It is based on data from nearly 60,000 specimens (mostly from Museum collections) and comprises three sections. The first is a set of point distribution maps – 325 in all, one for each species recorded from Australia

Sections two and three provide calendars using collection dates as a surrogate for flight times. However, a species known from Cape York to southern Tasmania, for example, will differ across such a large range so the information was partitioned firstly by Biogeographical areas, of which Australia has 89 designated. The calendars show the number of adult specimens for each month arranged in the most recent taxonomic order. They are actual numbers, not standardised in any way, so the reader can judge the extent of the data.

Biogeographic zones are based primarily on geological and botanical characteristics whereas dragonfly flight is more likely to be influenced by temperature and hydrology. The third section of the book sorts the data into Australia's 27 Climate Zones and provides a calendar for each.

Copies are not available commercially but can be obtained from the author in pdf format at no charge.

Contact ian.endersby@bigpond.com

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Geology Group Meeting via Zoom 25th August: Dr Gary Presland presented on: *Indigenous use of geological Resources*. Economic, artistic and ceremonial aspects were treated. 40 people attended on Zoom **Ken Griffiths**

Day Group Meeting via Zoom 28th September. Max Campbell, gave a brief overview from his many visits to Mali Dunes over a decade from 2009 –2019. This included a timeline of its history since 2002 and the results of wildlife surveys. This presentation was repeated via Zoom on Wednesday evening 6th October. Some of the images used appear below. **J Broadberry**

Mali Dunes Mammal Species List

Short-beaked Echidna	<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>
Western Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus fuliginosus</i>
Fat-tailed Dunnart	<i>Sminthopsis crassicaudata</i>
Southern Ningau	<i>Ningau yvonneae</i>
Lesser Long-eared Bat	<i>Nyctophilus geoffroyi</i>
Chocolate Wattled Bat	<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>
Southern Forest Bat	<i>Vespadelus regulus</i>
Little Forest Bat	<i>Vespadelus vulturinus</i>
Mitchell's Hopping-mouse	<i>Notomys mitchellii</i>
Silky Mouse	<i>Pseudomys apodemoides</i>
House Mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
European Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
House Cat	<i>Felis catus</i>
15 species recorded so far	



Notomys mitchellii M. Campbell

Pseudomys apodemoides, Silky Mouse.
A. McCutcheon



Mali Dunes Reptile Species List

Marbled Gecko	<i>Christinus marmoratus</i>
Red-tailed Worm-lizard	<i>Aprasia inaurita</i>
Marble-faced Delma	<i>Delma australis</i>
Obscure Skink	<i>Morethia obscura</i>
Common Dwarf Skink	<i>Menetia greyii</i>
Shingleback	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>
Norris Dragon	<i>Amphibolurus norrisi</i>
Mallee Military Dragon	<i>Ctenophorus fordi</i>
Painted Dragon	<i>Ctenophorus pictus</i>
Central Bearded Dragon	<i>Pogona vitticeps</i>
Sand Goanna	<i>Varanus gouldii</i>
# Heath Monitor	<i>Varanus rosenbergi</i>
# Masters' Snake	<i>Drysdalia mastersii</i>
Common Brown Snake	<i>Pseudonaja textilis</i>
14 species recorded so far	

Mali Dunes Bird Species List (Address: Millers Road, Yanac North)

Bird names and taxonomic order in accordance with the Australian Checklist, Christidis L. & Boles WE (2008)

Species	Species
Emu	Singing Honeyeater
*Malleefowl	White-eared Honeyeater
Stubble Quail	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
Australian Wood Duck	White-fronted Honeyeater
Common Bronzewing	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird
Spotted Nightjar	Crimson Chat
Australian Owllet-nightjar	White-fronted Chat
Black-shouldered Kite	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
Whistling Kite	New Holland Honeyeater
Brown Goshawk	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Collared Sparrowhawk	*Grey-crowned Babbler
Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-browed Babbler
*Little Eagle	White-winged Triller
Nankeen Kestrel	*Red-lored Whistler
Brown Falcon	Gilbert's Whistler
Banded Lapwing	Golden Whistler
Masked Lapwing	Rufous Whistler
Painted Button-quail	Grey Shrike-thrush
Galah	* Crested Bellbird
Little Corella	Masked Woodswallow
Cockatiel	White-browed Woodswallow
Eastern Rosella	Dusky Woodswallow
Mallee Ringneck	Grey Butcherbird
Red-rumped Parrot	Australian Magpie
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Grey Currawong
Pallid Cuckoo	Grey Fantail
Red-backed Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail
Rainbow Bee-eater	Australian Raven
Superb Fairy-wren	Little Raven
Variegated Fairy-wren	Restless Flycatcher
Shy Heathwren	Jacky Winter
Rufous Fieldwren	Red-capped Robin
Weebill	*Hooded Robin
Yellow Thornbill	Southern Scrub-robin
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Silvereye
Inland Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Pardalote	Tree Martin
Striated Pardalote	Australasian Pipit
78 species recorded so far	



#Listed as Critically endangered under Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988- Threatened List August 2021

*Listed as Vulnerable under Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988- Threatened List August 2021



Eastern Banjo Frog

Limnodynastes dumerilii

A. McCutcheon



Spotted Nightjar, *Eurostoopodus argus*

***** * Congratulations to * * Peter Latz, winner of the * * 2021 Australian Natural * * History Medallion * *****

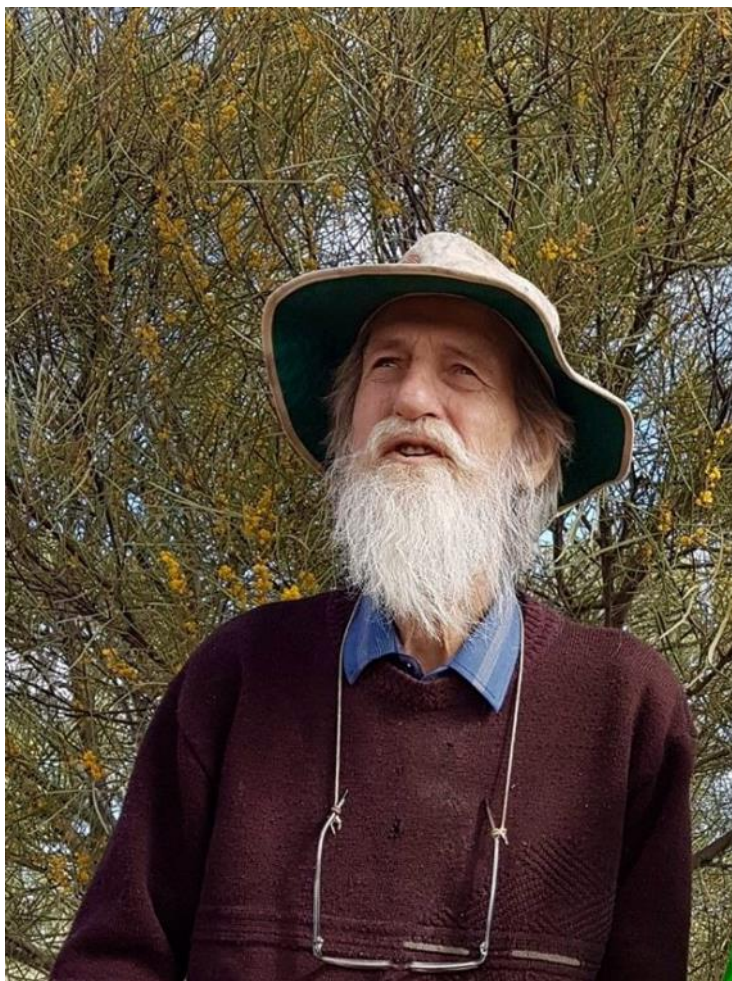
The 2021 Australian Natural History Medallion has been awarded to Peter Latz for his contribution to Ethnobotany, Conservation and Education.

Peter was nominated by the Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club.

The presentation will be made to Peter, at Alice Springs, at a time yet to be determined, dependent upon prevailing COVID 19 restrictions.

Photo right: Peter is standing in front of a specimen of *Acacia latzii*, one of several species named after him.

Photo: Ian Coleman, Olive Pink Botanic Garden.



Grey Fantail Nest. **Photo:** Lauren Burns

Grey Fantails

Recently whilst walking in the Mullum Mullum Valley in Donvale I stopped in one of my favourite bird watching locations. I normally see King Parrots, Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Superb Fairy Wrens and many more too numerous to mention.

I have always been interested in animal and bird behaviour and find it more interesting than just ticking off a bird list. On this occasion I watched a Grey Fantail flitting through the foliage of nearby trees and shrubs. As I stood quietly watching the fantail it seemed to be getting more agitated at my presence. I tried to spot its wine-glass shaped nest in the foliage of the Pittosporum nearby and prepared to move on sooner than upset the bird.

Suddenly, to my amazement in an attempt to move me on, this tiny brave bird flew at my legs making contact with my slacks as it flew by. Maybe my feet had stirred up one of its main food sources, insects, and it was attempting to catch a meal, or as mentioned previously, I was just too close to its nest. For whichever reason, I did admire its bravery for such a small bird.

Cecily Falkingham

The Macquarie Collectors Chest

Philippa Burgess

Known as the Macquarie Collectors Chest and The Dixon Chest are two elaborate museums in miniature. Housed in exquisite cabinetry, relatively plain on the outside, but through a sophisticated device of brass spring loaded cylinders, the large centre cases are removed and the hidden layers of the contents are revealed. Secret drawers, concealed paintings, inner boxes, trays and cases house the contents. They were both believed to have belonged to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, (1761-1824), the 5th Governor of NSW from 1810 to 1822 and are now held in the State Library of New South Wales.

Although the chests were created to house some the earliest extant natural history of Australian birds, insects, butterflies and moths, seaweed, algae and shells, they were not intended as serious scientific or taxonomic arrangements, rather they were purely for decoration and display. Intended as genteel entertainment in an 1820's drawing room or library where select guests would exclaim with surprise and delight as the hidden layers were opened and slowly the unique collection revealed. This was an era of increased interest in exotic animals, plants and birds as a result of long voyages to distant far away lands. Returning with hundreds of plants and live and deceased animal specimens to fulfil the continuing interest of the public, private patrons and scientific minds.

Many small museums popped up, overflowing with taxidermied animals, preserved insects and huge arrangements of shells and corals. These were an extremely popular weekend excursion amongst genteel society. By 1810, There was a well established local market in Sydney for live and dead fauna and flora as exotic natural history specimens. Many books were also published on taxidermy, preparation and mounting objects of natural history- claiming to be for the use of museums and travellers.

The chests contain four closely packed trays of taxidermied birds, 80 in total. All the birds in the Macquarie Chest were found in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Sydney region in the early decades of the 19th century. In relation to other taxidermy bird collections, the Macquarie chest's birds are considered to be extremely well preserved. Both in vibrancy and the condition of the feathers. The preservation mixture is listed as containing arsenic, burnt alum, tanners bark, camphor and musk.

Lack of exposure to light, in storage for more than 150 years in Strathallan Castle in the Scottish highlands also helped considerably, along with the insect repellent qualities of the Cedar and Rosewood used in the chests construction. Two trays with inlaid cedar geometric partitions are filled with shells from the Sydney and Newcastle area. Marine specimens comprise fragments of seaweeds, egg sacks, sponges, barnacles and coralline algae. There are four exquisitely arranged trays of butterflies and moths, beetles and insects. Also hidden within the cabinets are a series of painted panels. Many opening and sliding panels, 13 per chest, are painted with Australian inland and coastal scenes incorporating birds and animals. Royal Spoonbills, Little Egrets, Pelicans, Galah, Crested Pigeon, Black Swans, a Cotton Pygmy Goose, Australian shelduck and Brolgas. There is also a larger painting of a colourful variety of fish.

These days of course such destruction of our fauna purely for entertainment is considered abhorrent. But the existence of the chests need to be viewed alongside the current norms of the times. Indeed these museums and collectors chests could surely be responsible for the interest that developed and inspired the forming of clubs such as our own Field Naturalists.

Ref: *Rare and Curious: The Secret History of Governor Macquarie's Collector's Chest*, by Elizabeth Ellis.

